Volume 4 Number 8 *Supporting NASA's LTP* August 1999

Nothin' but Net

A Simple Graphics Trick for Use on the Web

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Have you ever tried to make a feathered-edge graphic for a Web page? This can be a real challenge. One option would be to make the image a transparent GIF, but transparent GIFs don't work very well on a graphic with a feathered edge. Another possibility is to find the hexadecimal color that matches the background color of the graphic. If the background is black or white, it's very simple to make a feathered edge. You just have to be sure that the graphic feathers into a black or white background in the image and set the Web page background color to either black or white.

If you want a background color other than black or white, there are a couple of extra steps involved. Create the graphic as you would if the background color was black or white, but change the background to the color that you want the Web page background to be. In order to get the background color of the Web page to match the background color of the graphic, create a new graphic about one inch by one inch. Select the background color from the graphic with the feathered edge and fill the new graphic. Use this new graphic as the background image. This way you don't have to worry about finding the hexadecimal number for the color you want the background to be.

Now you have the background color you want and a feathered-edge graphic. This is a great trick that allows you to get what you want without having to worry about color matching or fighting with a transparent GIF.

This bulletin will also be available in Adobe Acrobat format on the Developers' Workshop Web site at: **http://developers.ivv.nasa.gov/collab/pubs/bulletin/**

News Bytes

LTC and Stanford SOLAR Center Team up for Webcasts, Electronic Field Trips

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The Stanford SOLAR Center and LTC (Learning Technologies Channel) have teamed up for what will be an eventful and powerful series for the 1999-2000 school year.

Eighteen interactive Webcasts and two electronic field trips have been scheduled, involving students from two middle school classes and two observatories. Online curricula designed for grades 2-4, 5-8, and 9-12 have been developed by NASA's Susanne Ashby. The programs in the series will be hosted by the "Backyard Astronomer," Paul Mortfield.

For more information, visit **http://quest.arc.nasa.gov/ltc/soho/index2.html**.

LTP Contacts and Services

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All changes to the LTP Contact List are being made by Jamie Silva at Ames Research Center. The list is currently located online at **http://learn.ivv.nasa.gov/LTPMGMT**. Should you have any changes, please contact Jamie at jsilva@mail.arc.nasa.gov.

Any LTP group needing technical, graphics, or other services from RSPAC should contact me at the e-mail address above.

LTP Support Available through November

Scott Gillespie
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Any of NASA's Learning Technologies Project groups needing technical, Web, graphics, or marketing support should submit requests for services as soon as possible.

The Remote Sensing Public Access Center (RSPAC), which provides general and specific support to all groups affiliated with LTP, has been granted a no-cost extension and will function through November 1999. Those LTP groups needing assistance are encouraged to contact RSPAC as soon as possible.

To request support, please contact Phyllis Griggs (pgriggs@rspac.ivv.nasa.gov). For more information about RSPAC's services, visit **http://developers.ivv.nasa.gov/rspac/index.html**.

In the Spotlight

Aviation Academy 2000 Project Featured in Local Newspaper

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The following article, written about Wooddale's (Tennessee) Aviation Academy 2000 program, an LTP group, was printed in the Commercial Appeal *newspaper in Memphis on Monday, July 12, 1999.*

Since he was little, Jason Backers has wanted to fly. Recently, he and five other Wooddale High School (Aviation) students got the chance to do just that. They attended a 10-day aerospace camp in Grand Forks, ND.

It was the first time Memphis City Schools students had attended the camp, which gives participants a look at aviation as a possible career. Northwest Airlines selected Backers, Marcus Burns, Scott Evans, Kendra Gunn, Pamela Holliday, and William Vaughn to attend the camp along with six students from Minneapolis and twenty from Detroit.

Students from Wooddale were selected because of the school's Aviation program. That program began four years ago with a grant from NASA of almost $1 million. Northwest picked up the $1,000 cost of tuition and room and board and flew the students to Grand Forks, which is about 70 miles northeast of Fargo and 90 minutes from the Canadian border.

While there, students briefly took the controls of an airplane and a helicopter. They also toured the airport and customs facility at Winnipeg, Canada, an air reserve base in Fargo with F-16s, and an air traffic control tower.

For Backers, flying proved to be the most exciting. "When I get up there," he said, "I do not want to come down at all." Vaughn agreed. "You're in charge for once instead of somebody else."

Backers is already planning his aviation career: fly for the Air Force, retire after 20 to 25 years, fly for Federal Express, save up money, and open his own flight school.

"It's a wonderful program for inner-city kids to get experience in aviation careers. They're visiting one of the premier aviation universities in the country," said Wooddale aviation program director Tom Schieffer. "We couldn't have raised that kind of money to send them."

John Moore, Northwest regional vice-president, said, "This hands-on experience at Aerospace Camp can help these high school students set their goals for career opportunities they may have believed were beyond their reach."

While flying appealed to a number of the participants, Burns, 15, has his eyes set on staying closer to the ground. He wants to be an air traffic controller.

While at camp, Burns tried out one of the air traffic simulator computers and guided pilots to an imaginary runway. "It was fun telling a pilot what altitude to go to, what direction to turn, and what speed to stay at," he said.

About his experience at the camp, Burns said, "We didn't want to leave. Everybody cried when we left."

Highlights & Happenings

A GESSUP Update

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In conjunction with GSFC's Earth and Space Sciences Education Project (GESSEP), 21 teachers participated in the July institute at Goddard. The 21 teachers included former GESSEP participants and teachers new to the program from Maryland, Connecticut, and West Virginia.

The Science Ambassador matches for the summer are: ACE—one team (2 teachers); Mars Mola/NEAR—one team (2 teachers); Antarctica—one team (3 teachers); Ice Sheets—one team (2 teachers); Landsat—one team (2 teachers); Sun Earth Connection Forum—2 teams (4 teachers); NASA Visualization—one team (2 teachers); Multiwavelength Milky Way—one team (2 teachers); Education Mall—one team (2 teachers).

An electronic feedback system has been established as part of the program to allow distance contact with teachers throughout the nation. The intent is to increase the use of the investigations among the developer teachers, among their colleagues, and for pilot testing. Pilot testing of the FY97, FY98, and FY99 investigations will continue during the 1999-2000 school year.

The Education Web site for GESSEP can be most easily accessed by going to **http://education.gsfc.nasa.gov** and clicking on the GESSEP logo.

Destination: Moon Opens to Rave Reviews

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The Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS, **http://www.hmns.org/hmns/planetarium.html**) opened its first fully immersive (SkyVision) show, *Destination: Moon*, on July 20, 1999, the 30th anniversary of the first human lunar landing. The first full show to feature computer-generated and archival full-dome graphics completely generated and produced by the Houston Museum of Natural Science, it is the result of a major NASA-HMNS-Rice University-Lunar and Planetary Institute (LPI) partnership. The program not only celebrates the successes of Apollo, it also

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looks toward future lunar exploration. The 24-minute show features a number of original segments.

Origin of the Moon contains full-dome graphics from Don Davis that show the impact of an object about the size of Mars blasting off a part of the Earth that congealed to form the Moon. Graphics were paid for by Museums Teaching Planet Earth ESIP. Content review was done by LPI.

Computer-generated 3-D models of a future Moon mining city, a spacecraft landing and docking, and a rover heading for work were created by Pat Rawlings and paid for by the JSC Public Affairs Office (PAO) and Earth Science branch. The renderings from the 3-D models were done by Sybil Media of Houston and paid for by LPI.

The JSC PAO provided archival lunar exploration movies which were projected into dome format by HMNS. Jack Schmitt provided new commentary (his fees were paid by Rice University), and excerpts from Gene Cernan's *Last Man on the Moon* rounded out the personal touch.

Clips from the show will be part of the Science Quest program of August 31, 1999. It will air at 10:00 a.m. CDT live, via satellite, and will be carried on PBS stations. The program will be available by Cu-SeeMe on the **polar.rice.edu** reflector. See **http://www.hmns.org/hmns/educator/quest99-00.htm** for more details.

Audiences agree that the immersive theatre brings the viewer into the action like no other planetarium show. The next new show will be *Powers of Time*, which will open December 31, 1999.

If you would like to be on the LTP Bulletin mailing list, please send e-mail to Scott Gillespie at: sgillespie@rspac.ivv.nasa.gov, or write to: BDM/RSPAC, 100 University Drive, Fairmont, WV 26554. Phone: (304) 367-8324, fax: (304) 367-8211.

NASA's Learning Technologies Project (LTP) Bulletin is a monthly publication produced by the Remote Sensing Public Access Center (RSPAC). RSPAC is a cooperative project of NASA's Office of Aeronautics' High Performance Computing and Communications (HPCC) program, TRW, and West Virginia University. RSPAC is located at the NASA Software Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) facility in Fairmont, West Virginia.

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August 1999

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED